

BIRD NOTES CHIEFLY FROM THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT
OF KENYA

PART II

by W. Tomlinson.

ALAUDIDAE

Mirafrja albicauda Reichenow.
Thika, April.

White-tailed Lark.

Mirafrja hypermetra hypermetra (Reichenow)
Angata Kasut; Merille; Thika.

Red-winged Bush-lark.

In the Kasut to the south-west of Marsabit Mountain this large lark was fairly common, haunting a patch of desert where there was some bush and even grass following rain. Runs well in quick spurts; but, pursued, usually takes wing. The flight is strong, although it seldom goes far before ducking down again, usually perching on tops of bushes. In the heat of the day seen sheltering under bush. Has a clear and loud, two-noted call and a very pretty song of four or five notes. The cinnamon-rufous of its plumage shows in flight but is invisible in the bird when at rest. At Merille, the Kasut and at Thika, where this bird occurred, the ground was the same russet colour as the bird's plumage.

Mirafrja africana dohertyi Hartert
Thika; Nanyuki.

Kikuyu Red-naped Lark.

Mirafrja fischeri fischeri (Reichenow)
Thika.

Flappet Lark.

Mirafrja africanoides intercedens Reichenow.
Merille; North Horr.

Masaï Fawn-coloured Lark.

A "flappet-lark," fairly common at Merille in January, was I think this. At the time a small cricket was in thousands in patches of open country, followed up by Larks and Wattled Starlings.

Mirafrja poecilosterna poecilosterna (Reichenow).
Merille.

Pink-breasted Singing Lark.

A bird frequently flushed from the ground, which flew to bushes and low trees, was I think this.

Galerida cristata somaliensis Reichenow.

Somali Crested Lark.

At North Horr this bird was very common. Song sweet, often uttered from the ground. Seldom perched on bushes. When approached, often crouched motionless until almost trodden on, then flew up and dashed down behind cover. Found singly, sometimes in small lots of three to four birds.

Galerida theklae ellioti Hartert.

Somali Thekla Lark.

I saw no Crested Larks at Kalacha or Gamra; but they occurred on the lava plains about twenty miles north of Marsabit and I feel certain that some seen on the plains north-east of Marsabit on the Moyale track belonged to this species. A comparison between *Galerida cristata magna* and *Galerida theklae cyrenaicae*, the Egyptian equivalent, so common at Sollum is interesting. *G. cristata magna* is there a purely desert bird, whilst *theklae* is restricted to coastal cliffs and rocky wadis.

Eremopteryx leucotis madaraszi (Reichenow).
Near Merille, January

East African Sparrow-Lark.

Large flocks were seen on a rocky hillslope. Many were on the ground, but some rested in stunted acacias. The flight was graceful, somewhat hovering when heading upward; several times birds were seen to sweep in wide circles before alighting.

Eremopyeryx signata (Oustalet)
Merille, North Horr.

Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark.

Merille, particularly round the Matthews Range, abounded in Sparrow-Larks. A flock of about twenty of this species was seen on a lava dust plain, fraternising with a few Isabelline Wheatears. They perched on the tops of rocks and on the topmost twigs of the few bits of scrub. Call note was a rather sharp "chip-op" At North Horr seen in pairs in February.

Eremopteryx leucopareia (Fischer and Reichenow)
Merille; Angata Kasut

From December to February seen many times, always in sandy or dusty country dotted with rock and low scrub; In pairs at Merille in December, and in flocks at Merille and in Kasut in January and February. At one oasis in the Kasut—an old camping ground—I came across a flock while I was following up some Somali Bee-eaters. They were crouched behind rocks and under bushes, apparently for shade as it was a blistering hot day, and as I approached they rose one after the other at my feet, flying low for a short distance before dropping into cover once again. The call was a chirrup.

MOTACILLIDAE

Motacilla alba alba Linn.
North Horr.

White Wagtail.

Common at oasis pools 18th to 25th February.

Motacilla aguimp vidua Sundervall.
Thika; Meru.

African Pied Wagtail

Motacilla clara Sharpe
Meru.

Mountain Wagtail.

Common on upper reaches of mountain streams.

Budytes flavus flavus (Linn.)

Blue-headed Wagtail.

Benane (November); North Horr (15th February 1941); Siolo River (23rd March 1941).

Common at pools in river at Benane, and on a lava plain near the Siolo River in March. A single bird only seen at North Horr at an oasis pool.

Budytes flavus thunbergi (Billberg.)
Siolo River (23rd March 1941).

Grey-headed Wagtail.

A few by a manyatta not far from the Siolo River.

Budytes flavus luteus (S. G. Gmelin).
Siolo River (23rd March 1941).

Eastern Yellow Wagtail.

Amongst many Wagtails seen on this date, several of this race were seen associating with the type form.

Anthus trivialis trivialis (Linn).
Merille; Marsabit.

Tree-Pipit.

A few seen at Merille in late January. Fairly common on Marsabit mountain in late March.

Tmetothylacus tenellus (Cabanis).
Benane; Merille.

Golden Pipit.

On a day of violent rain and heavy low clouds many suddenly appeared in the wilderness around Benane. Seen on the ground, this bird appears dull, but as soon as it takes wing the brilliant yellow of its plumage flashes out with rare beauty. A male and female were watched for some time. The female fed quietly on the ground whilst the male courted her with great vigour. The cock would swoop down right on to the hen as though trying to force her to rise, hovering over her with wildly fluttering wings and widespread

tail until at last she flew fast and tortuously, to alight some way away. The male has a very high, thin, sibilant warble, uttered with wings a-flutter and tail expanded. When disturbed, these Pipits often alighted on bushes or trees. Another habit is that of a bird launching itself from a treetop with wings upturned over the back in a V, and volplaning rapidly towards the ground, only to rise abruptly to the top of another tree. Invariably just before alighting the wings were again extended into a V, and tail feathers widely spread.

On another occasion a male was seen hovering quite high, beating its wings rapidly and with wide-spread tail, when suddenly it closed its wings and dived like a stone to a tree-top below.

These antics were performed by the male alone. The date was 26th November. Subsequently a single male was seen at Merille, 11th and 12th February, very unobtrusive and very wild.

Macronyx croceus croceus (Vieillot).

Yellow-throated Long claw.

Nanyuki.

Breeding in April, and common.

Macronyx ameliae wintoni Sharpe.

Kenya Rosy-breasted Long-claw.

Kikuyu.

TIMALIIDAE

Turdoides hypoleuca (Cabanis.)

Kenya Pied Babbler.

Mana (Jombeni Mountains); Thika.

Call insistent and harsh, a loud "quorr-quorr"; flight wavering and weak. Birds at Mana skulked in dense cover, but at Thika I met a group in open sparsely-treed country, and was able to examine them more closely.

Argya rubiginosa rubiginosa (Rüppell).

Rufous Chatterer.

Merille; Marsabit: North Horr, Siolo River.

Common at Merille. Call a long plaintive quavering whistle. Only once seen away from the dense bush they favour; that was at Merille when a flock was seen passing up-river through the tree-tops. Inhabits dense vegetation along rivers and watercourses. In flocks November-March.

Argya rubiginosa heuglini Sharpe.

Coastal Rufous Chatterer.

Mombasa

PYCNONOTIDAE

Pycnonotus tricolor fayi Mearns.

Kenya Highland Black-capped Bulbul.

Meru; Nanyuki; Thika.

Pycnonotus tricolor littoralis van Someren.

Coast Black-capped Bulbul.

Mombasa.

Pycnonotus tricolor dodsoni Sharpe.

White-eared Bulbul.

Isiolo; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Marsabit; Laisamis; North Horr; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

Common and breeding at Merille in November and December. The sleek and colourful plumage of the Marsabit birds in March contrasted strongly with the appearance of birds in the low country. At Meru and Nanyuki the race was *P. tricolor fayi*, whilst at Mana in the Jombeni Mountains east of Mount Kenya and at a greater altitude, the white-eared form (*P. t. dodsoni*) was found.

Arizelocichla tephrolaema kikuyuensis (Sharpe).

Kikuyu Grey-throated Greenbul.

Meru, 3rd April at about 6,000 feet.

Phyllastrephus strepitans (Reichenow).
Merille; North Horr; Benane.

East African Scrub Bulbul.

At Merille common in parties of three or four birds in dense scrub along the river-bed. It forages methodically, passing slowly from bush to bush and tree to tree, often dropping to the ground to pick up insects like a Drongo. It has a habit of "twinkling" its wings and tail; I found it surprisingly tame. The note is a pleasant chatter.

Phyllastrephus fischeri placidus (Shelley).
Marsabit; Nanyuki.

Kenya Highlands Olive Bulbul.

A party of four seen in a deep forested ravine on Marsabit Mountain in March. Very sociable and restless, flitting about rapidly from branch to branch, often hanging in all sorts of positions like a Tit. Has the habit of spreading out its tail in quick flicks. Call, a churring note, taken up by all birds when alarmed. They fed in dense undergrowth close to the ground.

Andropadus insularis subalaris Reichenow.
Mombasa.

Malindi Sombre Bulbul.

I thought I heard one in bush near Merille, but could not confirm.

Stelgidocichla latirostris eugenia (Reichenow).
Nanyuki.

Uganda Moustached Bulbul.

A single bird seen flitting about in forest undergrowth, uttering "chuck—chuck—chuck" calls.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Muscicapa striata striata (Pallas).

Spotted Flycatcher.

Isiolo, October; Benane; Merille; Laisamis; Siolo River, 23rd March; Marsabit; Meru, 10th April; Habbaswein. Widely distributed.

Muscicapa gambagae somaliensis Bannerman.
Benane; Merille.

Somali Dusky Flycatcher.

At Benane on two occasions numbers of what was possibly this small Flycatcher associated with Spotted Flycatcher during November and December. Largest number seen together was twelve birds.

Alseonax minimus minimus (Heuglin).
Nanyuki; Meru; Marsabit.

Pigmy Flycatcher.

Common, particularly at Meru and Marsabit.

Dioptrornis fischeri Reichenow.

White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher.

Meru; Nanyuki; Thika; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

Widely distributed. At Mana very noisy in April. The call is a hoarse, throaty squeal. At Meru in April common singly, in pairs, and family parties of three to four birds. Immature birds being fed by parents in Nanyuki, 20th April. Rather Drongo-like in its habit of hawking for insects.

Parisoma bohmi marsabit Van Someren.
Isiolo; Merille.

Marsabit Tit-Babbler.

An attractive thorn-bush bird, extremely common at Isiolo. There the air used to be filled with their song, a very pleasant trill, often preceded by two sharp notes. It is a leaf-searcher: small lots of two to three individuals were seen hunting through bushes and flat-topped acacias for insects. Restless but sociable, and often found in foraging parties after Crombecs, Sunbirds, etc.

Batis molitor puella Reichenow.

Kenya Chin-spot Flycatcher.

Isiolo; Nanyuki; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

Batis orientalis perkeo Neumann.

Pigmy Grey-headed Flycatcher.

Benane; Habbaswein; Merille.

A bird of the dry, dense thorn-bush and flat-topped acacias. Calls a harsh "chur" and a series of four weak "peeps." Wings noisy in flight. I think breeding at Benane in November, after heavy rain, when a male bird was seen soaring round and round, high in the air, calling loudly over the bush.

Platysteira peltata peltata Sundevall.

Black-throated Wattle-eye.

Thika, April.

Tchitrea viridis viridis (P. L. S. Müller).

Paradise Flycatcher.

Meru; Nanyuki.

A male in full chestnut plumage seen at about 5,300 feet at Meru, 3rd April. On the 7th, also at Meru, but at 7,000 feet, a male in full white breeding-plumage was seen. At Nanyuki at about 6,500 feet in forest, a chestnut-plumaged male was seen on the 15th.

Tchitrea viridis suahelica (Reichenow).

Swahili Paradise Flycatcher.

Benane; Isiolo; Marsabit; Siolo River.

On 9th November a fully-plumaged white male, with elongated tail feathers, was seen in arid bush at Benane.

At Merille, on 8th January, a male was seen with partial development of breeding-plumage; the wings were mainly white, with some dusky markings; the tail white with black shafts but no elongation present. Subsequently this bird was watched for development. By 19th January the tail was elongated to about half-length. On 25th January it was seen with a female bird in a tree. The tail of the male was now more elongated still. The two birds perched opposite each other on parallel branches, high up in the tree, the male every now and then rising and fluttering over his mate with beating wings and spread tail. Sometimes he made wide circular flights; but always returned to his perch opposite the hen, and then both went through a lot of dipping and bowing to each other. A Van der Decken's Hornbill alighted in the tree and both Flycatchers furiously attacked it, the male particularly making vicious stoops, uttering loud cries, and finally, after making a few beak snaps at its tormentors, the Hornbill beat a rapid retreat.

10th February: Male in full breeding-plumage.

12th February: At Marsabit a male seen in full breeding-plumage, but with some chestnut on wings and also in the shorter tail-feathers, the long rectrices white, with black shafts.

23rd March: Siolo River. Male seen in full breeding-plumage. A patch on the back was chestnut, the wing-quills dusky grey with conspicuous white edgings to feathers. Tail white with black shafts.

It would seem that the pure white form of *T. v. suahelica* occurs in the low country only in the N.F.D.

TURDIDAE

Turdus olivaceus elgonensis (Sharpe).

Kenya Olive Thrush.

Marsabit; Meru; Nanyuki.

Common and tame on Marsabit mountain. When alarmed, individuals quiver and twitch the tail rapidly up and down. Mt. Kenya birds seem much darker than the Marsabit ones.

Turdus tephronotus Cabanis.

Bare-eyed Thrush.

Benane; Merille; Laisamis.

Essentially a bird of arid thorn-scrub and rocky country. Wild and shy at Benane in November, and mainly in pairs. Alarm note a series of four or five musical whistles. When alarmed they flew to dense cover, rested for a moment, and then disappeared, to emerge quickly at the opposite side, and dash away further into the "bana." At Merille very shy until February, when individuals suddenly developed the habit of approaching our camp and singing, thrush-like, from the tops of tall trees.

Monticola saxatilis (Linn).

European Rock Thrush.

Isiolo, 10th December; Merille, January; Laisamis; Isiolo, 21st March 1941.

Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe (Linn).

European Wheatear.

Isiolo, December.

Fairly common in rocky country around Isiolo; but I did not record it elsewhere in the N.F.D.

Oenanthe leucomela leucomela (Pallas).

Pied Wheatear.

Merille; Laisamis; Marsabit; Kalacha; North Horr.

End January, at Merille, a male heard to utter a sharp guttural alarm note. They were shy. Common from Marsabit to North Horr until early March.

Oenanthe isabellina (Temminck and Laugier).

Isabelline Chat.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Siolo River; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr.

Common throughout N.F.D. November to end March.

Cercomela scotocerca turkana van Someren.

Turkana Brown-tailed Rock-chat.

Isiolo; Benane; Merille; Laisamis.

A charming bird of the bush veld, met with first at Isiolo in November, and common there until I left at the end of March. Found in low thorn bush, in rocky country by the river (at Benane) and on the lava plains (north of Merille). Very tame, permitting close approach. Never seen in tall, flat-topped acacias; hunts about on the ground, scrabbling amongst rocks and round the bases of bushes; I often mistook it for a small mammal. It would alight on the tops of low bushes and work its way down to the base. The ordinary note is a sweet, powerful "chuke—chuke," but there is also, less often heard, a short sweet trilled song. The "chuke" note was uttered for hours on end by birds searching bushes for insects. Characteristic is the continuous "twinkling" of wings and spasmodic jerking of tail into a wide fan. I found this bird to be solitary. Often seen with its feathers all puffed out, when it resembled a grey-brown ball. Flight fast and brisk, but it seldom goes far at a time.

Myrmecocichla aethiops cryptoleuca Sharpe.

Kenya Anteater Chat.

Nanyuki; on edge of escarpment twenty-five miles north of Nanyuki on Isiolo road; Kenyanga (Jombeni Mountains).

Local. Common on northern slopes of the Jombeni in rocky country, but not seen on the forested Tana River near Mana. None at Meru.

Saxicola torquata axillaris (Shelley).

Kilimanjaro Stonechat.

Meru; Nanyuki.

Common at Nanyuki in April; many young birds seen.

Cossypha heuglini heuglini Hartlaub.

White-browed Robin-Chat.

Meru; Marsabit; Siolo River; Nanyuki.

Common at Marsabit in forest. A pair began a nest in a deep crevice in the trunk of a forest tree, about fifteen feet from the ground, early in March. Both birds worked hard, taking up first bits of twig and then leaves. Afterwards, when the female was sitting, the male adopted an "on-sentry-go" position below the nest, and vigorously chased intruders away, particularly shrikes.

Cossypha heuglini intermedia (Cabanis).
Mombasa.

Mombasa White-browed Robin-chat.

Cossypha semirufa intercedens (Cabanis).
Meru.

Kenya Black-tailed Robin-Chat.

Found alongside *C. heuglini*. I could detect no difference in habits.

Cossypha caffra iolema Reichenow.
Meru, April.

Kenya Robin-Chat.

One in banana forest was seen hopping along the ground searching for insects. Loud churring alarm note. Much shyer than *C. heuglini*.

Cichladusa guttata guttata (Heuglin).
Merille; Siolo River; Benane; Mombasa.

Spotted Morning Warbler.

Common in dense riverside bush at Merille, and singing well from December to February. Found in pairs. As I procured no skins or specimens it is possible that all those that I saw were *Cichladusa guttata rufipennis* or intermediates.

Erythropygia leucoptera leucoptera (Rüppell).

White-winged Scrub-Robin.

Garba Tula; Merille; North Horr; Benane; Laisamis.

This was widely distributed throughout the N.F.D., but nowhere so common as at Benane and Garba Tula. It was tame, haunting the topmost twigs of low thorn bushes, and sang its sweet warbled song the whole day through. It used even to enter our Mess-tent, and, after a hasty scurry over the floor, perch just outside on a bush. It constantly "twinkles" its wings and tail, the latter often being cocked over the back. It usually feeds on the ground under bushes, though I often caught it out in the open. The song is varied, but is usually of five or six notes. Another call uttered was a loud "chee—chee—chee—chee." At Merille it seemed wilder than at Benane; possibly it was nesting there, for a nestling was picked up at Benane on 25th January.

Numerous unidentified Scrub-Robins were seen: unfortunately I was unable to collect them. One seen in the bracken forests at Mana on the summit of the Jombeni Mountains was singing a loud sweet song of five or six notes. At Isiolo and Merille Scrub-Robins occurred that certainly were not *Erythropygia leucoptera leucoptera*, there being no white in the wing feathers.

Irania gutturalis (Guérin).
Benane, December.

White-throated Robin.

A single male was seen in a shallow "donga" choked with thorn scrub, through which it scabbled like a mouse.

SYLVIIDAE

Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla (Linn.)
Marsabit, 10th to 15th March 1941.

Blackcap.

Fairly common in bush below forest at Marsabit. Both males and females seen. Rather shy. One bird heard singing beautifully on the 15th.

Acrocephalus scoenobaenus (Linn).

Sedge-Warbler.

Benane; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr; Silio River, 23rd March 1941; Meru, 3rd April 1941.

First seen and heard at Benane in early November. Very common at Merille in January and February. A few at North Horr in late February.

Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus (Linn).

Willow Warbler.

Isiolo, March; Siolo River, 23rd March 1941.

Calamonastes simplex simplex (Cabanis).

Grey Wren-Warbler

Garba Tula; Benane; Merille.

Most common at Benane in the "bana." Song short and "chip-chipping" in character always uttered from the top of a bush or tree. When disturbed it either flew far away to another tree-top, there to resume its call, or hastily ducked down into dense cover where it was very difficult to follow up.

Genus *Apalis*

Many of these birds were seen in the N.F.D., but the difficulty was to classify them without procuring specimens. At Marsabit I saw *Apalis cinerea cinerea*. At Isiolo I saw several times a Forest Warbler with a broad black chest band and salmon-coloured lower parts, which I classified as *Apalis pulchra pulchra*. This was in acacia country. In a dry stream in forest at Nanyuki, at 7,000 feet, several bush warblers, presumably *Apalis melanocephala nigrodorsalis*, were seen.

Apalis flavida malensis Neumann.

Abyssinian Black-breasted Bush-Warbler.

Benane; Isiolo; Merille

Benane, 10th November. A pair seen in arid bush near our camp. Very restless, and constantly on the move with rapid, darting flight from one bush to another, always keeping near the ground. A lot of "twinkling" of wings and tail.

Isiolo, 22nd March. A pair seen by a wooded watercourse, flitting rapidly through the acacias as they searched for food. Very noisy, uttering a persistent soft "querr—querr—querr."

Apalis flavida flavocincta (Sharpe).

Kenya Black-breasted Bush-Warbler.

Nanyuki, at 6,500 feet in riverside timber. Always in pairs or small parties.

Eminia lepida Hartlaub.

Grey-Capped Swamp-Warbler.

Meru; Mana (Jombeni Mountains)

At Meru mainly in gardens and dense waterside timber and cultivations along mountain streams. Call beautiful and powerful. One theme heard was of two sharp notes followed by a rapid flute-like trill of four or five whistles. Also common at Mana, on the summit of the Jombeni Mountains, in early April.

Sylvietta brachyura leucopsis Reichenow.

Kenya Crombec.

Isiolo; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr; Kalacha.

Common throughout the N.F.D., even in the most desolate regions. Favours bush and low trees in rocky country. Found in pairs and small lots; the greatest number seen in one party was seven at Merille. Very sociable, attaching itself to foraging parties of other birds. A "churring" note and a very vigorous little warbling song were often heard, the latter being—like the English wren's—exceptionally loud considering the tiny size of the bird.

Sylvietta whytii jacksoni Sharpe.

Kenya Red-faced Crombec.

Isiolo; Merille; Laisamis.

Seen singly and in pairs in flat-topped acacia country. Has a low twittering song and a soft churring alarm note.

Sylvietta isabellina Elliot.

Long-billed Crombec.

Benane; Isiolo.

Most common at Benane, where it was seen many times in the bush, often associating with the Kenya Crombec.

Sylvietta l. leucophrys Sharpe.

White-browed Crombec.

Nanyuki, at 7,000 feet.

Seen a few times in tall forest trees by a river on Mt. Kenya in April, in lots of two to three individuals.

Eremomela griseoflava abdominalis Reichenow. Tanganyika Yellow-bellied Eremomela

I have several records of birds of this genus being seen in the flat-topped acacias at Isiolo, both with parties of foraging Crombecs and also with their own kind in twos and threes. Exceedingly restless, but not very shy, and easily approached. The only call heard was a sweet, low twittering song, uttered as they searched the leaves for insects. A bird of this species seen at Benane in November may have been either this race or *E. g. flavicrissalis* Sharpe. It was solitary and silent in low bush.

Camaroptera brevicaudata abessinica Zedlitz.

Abyssinian Grey-backed Glass-eye.

Siolo River; Merille; Meru; Marsabit, Mana (Jombeni Mts.); Nanyuki; Nairobi; Thika.

Very common at Marsabit in March. Nesting at Nanyuki in April. Notes a "clucking" call, a loud "too-white" uttered with a "lip-smacking" effect, and a bleat. Curious in the comparative gloom of a forest, is the effect of a white abdomen flashing out as the bird hops through the bush with cocked tail. It is curiously like the flash of white showing from a rabbit's tail. Perhaps, as in that case, it is also a signal to its mate.

Cisticola chiniana humilis Madarasz.

Settima Rattler.

Siolo River; Isiolo.

Cisticola chiniana bodessa Mearns.

Hawash Rattler.

Benane; Merille; Marsabit.

Common and tame at Marsabit in March. Sociable, often found in small family parties. Common at Benane in November. Song loud and clear, "chip—chip—chip—tiperee." At Marsabit in the misty, early morning as many as four birds were seen huddled on a sprig of low bush, with feathers all puffed out, awaiting the morning sun.

Cisticola erythrops sylvia Reichenow.

Uganda Red-faced Grass-Warbler.

Meru.

Prinia mistacea immutabilis van Someren.

Kenya Tawny-flanked Long-tail.

Nairobi; Thika; Nanyuki; Kabete.

Prinia somalica erlangeri Reichenow.

Stephanie Pale Long-tail.

Benane; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr.

In November common at Benane, in pairs and small lots of up to four. Movements erratic and rapid, the long tail jerked up and wagged in all directions; up and down, sideways, and rotating. They flew so low that they seemed to scuttle along, and when the hot wind was blowing they were more like a raggle-taggle of bits of brown paper than birds. As distinct from the bush-loving *mistacea*, the Stephanie Long-tail spends a lot of time on the ground amongst lava rock and about the base of bushes. At Merille it was

fairly common. A "twink—twink" note was heard uttered by one of a pair scrambling about amongst rocks. They have also a low "churring" call, but I did not hear the real song until I reached North Horr in February. Here in dense bush they were extremely common, in pairs and small lots, from dawn to dusk uttering a vigorous and loud "chip—chipping" song of five or six notes. There was considerable variation in the tawny wash of the lower parts. North Horr birds seemed brighter below than those of Benane.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Hirundo r. rustica Linn. European Swallow.

Marsabit 16th March 1941.

The only time I identified the swallow was whilst walking on the open downs near Marsabit village on 16th March 1941, when numerous flocks, some low down and some at immense heights, passed in a northerly direction.

Hirundo g. griseopyga Sundevall. Grey-rumped Swallow.

Siolo River; N. Uaso Nyero near Archer's Post; Meru; Marsabit.

Locally common, preferring hill-slopes near streams or rivers. At Meru one bird resting on a fence uttered a pleasant little twittering song.

Hirundo s. smithi Leach. Wire-tailed Swallow.

Siolo River, N. Uaso Nyero (near Archer's Post); Meru; Isiolo; Mombasa.

Hirundo rufula emini Reichenow. Great Lakes Red-rumped Swallow.

Meru, at about 5,500 feet, in a river valley, numbers could be seen daily, resting during the hot hours on the branches of a low, leafless tree.

Hirundo senegalensis aschani Granvik. Kenya Mosque Swallow.

Nanyuki.

Hirundo senegalensis monteiri Hartlaub. Monteiro's Mosque Swallow.

Mombasa.

Hirundo abyssinica unitatis Sclater and M. Praed. South African Smaller Striped Swallow.

Siolo River; N. Uaso Nyiro (Archer's Post); Meru; Thika; Nairobi

Psalidoprocne holomelaena massaica Neumann. Masai Rough-Wing.

Meru; Nanyuki.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Campephaga flava Vieillot. Black Cuckoo-shrike.

Isiolo; Merille; Nanyuki.

Coracina pectoralis (Jardine and Selby). White-breasted Cuckoo-Shrike.

A pair seen in January, in open country dissected by frequent wadis and dotted with trees. One bird uttered a curious trilled note as it perched on the topmost branches of a tall tree. I tried to get a skin, but they were very wild.

Coracina caesia pura (Sharpe). Elgon Grey Cuckoo-Shrike.

Marsabit; Nanyuki (6,500 feet).

DICRURIDAE

Dicrurus adsimilis divaricatus (Lichtenstein).

Senegal Glossy-backed Drongo.

Widely distributed though rarer at Marsabit and absent from Kalacha and North Horr. A fledgling picked up at Merille at the end of December had fallen out of the nest. Young birds being fed by parents were very numerous in January. The young bird, whilst waiting to be fed, utters a continuous, low, twittering warble, only audible within twenty yards. The youngster hardly opens its beak at all as it sings; it seems to be entirely a "stomach" warble. When a parent approached with some tit-bit in its beak, the low babble would rise to a screaming crescendo, then the young bird would ravenously gulp the food and resume the quiet babble. The parent birds urged the young one to follow them, first on short trial flights, then on longer and longer ones, until by the end of the month the youngster was bigger and stronger than the parents, had ceased to babble, and was feeding itself.

PRIONOPIDAE

Prionops cristata melanopectera Sharpe.

Somali Helmet-Shrike.

Benane; Garba Tula; Merille.

Very common in the bush around Benane and Garba Tula. I mentioned in my notes on vultures how a flock haunted the carcass of a Spotted Hyæna. At Merille it was equally common, in parties of four to five, and always very sociable. Foraging flocks attract other birds to them, and many times I saw Black-throated Barbets, White-crowned Shrikes and the peculiar Red-winged Anaplectes keeping close company with them as they flew from tree to tree. It also frequently forages on the ground, like a Drongo. The call is a soft-toned yet loudly uttered "chow—chow" often repeated as many as seven or eight times in quick succession, both whilst perched and on the wing.

During the third week of February, in acacias at Merille, I suddenly heard from above the unmistakable "chow—chow." Looking round I could see nothing. A few seconds later four Helmet-Shrikes flew up and alighted in the tree above my head. Then I saw the nest, beautifully concealed in a double fork about thirty feet from the ground. Through my glasses I could clearly distinguish the head of the sitting bird. The four birds that had flown up disappeared like ghosts. I watched the solitary bird for some time, and beyond shifting round once or twice, and once actually getting off the nest to hawk at a passing fly, it was silent. The next day I watched the nest carefully. Small birds, such as Crombecks, Grey Tits and Flycatchers were allowed to visit and forage in the tree, but when a White-crowned Shrike suddenly joined these, the sitting bird jumped out of the nest and attacked it, uttering loud and long "chow—chows" of distress, but failed to drive the Shrike away; it merely circled round once and came to rest again on the nesting tree. Then within a few seconds the other four Helmet-Shrikes arrived and attacked it, driving it away. Then, in a second it seemed, the sitting bird was back on the nest and the four guardians had disappeared; so discreetly was it all done that the separate movements passed unnoticed.

On a later day I watched a Hornbill treated in the same way. The call of distress of the sitting bird was louder and more frequently repeated than the normal call. I watched the four guardians, and found that the whole day through they foraged within a radius of about 200-300 yards of the nest; that is, within easy calling distance by the sitting bird. They never came unless called up.

A couple of days later I left for Marsabit, but left instructions for the nest to be watched. Unfortunately the boy climbed the tree after one or two failures, scared the sitting bird off the nest, and found two eggs with a pale olive-green ground covered with drab pink spots. He told me that the nest was beautifully woven externally, with grasses that shimmered with spiders' webs, whilst internally were a few bits of bark. The birds deserted, and he said that he thought he knew where they were building another nest, but I never heard from him again.

Sigmodus retzii graculinus (Cabanis).
Thika.

Kenya Red-billed Shrike.

Eurocephalus r. rueppelli Bonaparte.
Isiolo; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille.

White-crowned Shrike.

Occurs in pairs and lots of four. Very sociable, particularly with the Black-billed Sparrow-Weavers, which superficially it resembles in habits, and a little in appearance. It looks like a Grandpa Sparrow-Weaver. Also very friendly towards Superb and Wattled Starlings, Parrot-billed Sparrows and White-headed Buffalo Weavers. Immature birds were common at Merille in January, and were very tame. The slow bat-like flight and "chee—chee" call are distinctive.

Nilaus afer minor Sharpe.

Somali Brubru.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr.

Common throughout the acacia country of the N.F.D. Has a "churring" alarm note, and a "popping" call that reminds one of that of a Tinker-bird, but is less persistent.

LANIIDAE

Lanius collaris humeralis Stanley.

East African Fiscal.

Marsabit Village; Isiolo; Meru; Mana and Kunjanga (Jombeni Mountains).

Lanius antinorii Salvadori.

Somali Fiscal.

Marsabit; Angata Kasut; North Horr.

More of a bush and semi-desert bird than the E. A. Fiscal, and never at Marsabit. Occurring in forest, preferring low trees on the downs, where it was very tame and in pairs in December. A low "churring" alarm note was frequently heard. At North Horr it was equally tame in patches of dense, low bush west of the oasis pools; but there, in February, it was solitary.

Lanius dorsalis Cabanis.

Teita Fiscal.

Isiolo; Siolo River; Benana; Merille.

A bird of open bush country, common round Isiolo where it haunted lava beds dotted with low bush. Mainly solitary. A flute-like whistle heard, and a harsh "churring" alarm note.

Lanius cabanisi Hartert.

Long-tailed Fiscal.

Nanyuki; Thika.

Has two calls at least; a low in-drawn "chaak," and another, a loud mellow whistle. Common at Thika.

Lanius collurio Linn.

Red-backed Shrike.

Thika 15th April 1941.

Seen on one day only, and not common, the majority being males.

Corvinella corvina chapini Friedmann and Bowen
Merille.

Uganda Yellow-Billed Shrike.

I was very interested to meet with this bird on 16th January in a patch of dense bush and low acacia trees on a lava dust plain. The flock of almost twenty was associated with great numbers of Wattled Starlings, also foraging for food. Some fed on the ground, others perched on bushes and trees. The Wattled Starlings were shy, but the Shrike quite tame, mostly resting quietly in the trees. On the wing, however, they were

noisy, the call being a loud hoarse "schiss—schiss." The flight is direct and strong, the rising of one bird being a signal to the rest. The attraction was immense numbers of grasshoppers and locusts. A week later a flock, perhaps the same, was seen by the river-bed at Merille, this time with many kinds of other birds, including Wattled Starlings, Kenya Buffalo Weavers, Northern Carmine Bee-eaters and Abyssinian Masked Weavers. Again the birds were after young grasshoppers and locusts.

Laniarius f. funebris (Hartlaub). Slate-coloured Boubou.
Isiolo; Benane; Merille; Marsabit; Siolo River; Mombasa.

Laniarius ferrugineus ambiguus Madarasz Kilimanjaro Boubou.
Nanyuki; Meru; Marsabit.

Common on Marsabit Mountain in forested ravines and well-treed slopes, where its calls were heard all day long. Apart from the usual bell-like notes, I heard an alarm note like the rasping tear of canvas often answered by the other bird with a single bell-like note.

Dryoscopus cubla affinis (G. R. Gray). East African Puffback.
Meru; Nanyuki.

Dryoscopus gambensis nyansae Neumann. Uganda Puffback.
Siolo River; Marsabit.

A young bird being fed by a parent was seen at Marsabit on 1st March 1941.

Dryoscopus pringlii Jackson. Pringle's Puffback.
Benane; North Horr; Merille.

Tchagra s. senegala (Linn). Black-headed Tchagra.
Isiolo; Siolo River; Nanyuki; Meru; Kunjanga (Jombeni Mts.)
Common.

Tchagra australis littoralis (van Someren). East Coast Brown-headed Bush-Shrike.
Mombasa.

Tchagra j. jamesi (Shelley). Three-streaked Tchagra.
Merille; Benane.
Uncommon.

Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus similis (A. Smith). Southern Sulphur-breasted Bush-Shrike.
Marsabit.
Scarce.

Malaconotus poliocephalus approximans (Cabanis). East African Grey-headed Bush-Shrike.
Marsabit; Mombasa.

Rhodophoneus cruentus hilgerti (Neumann). Somali Rosy-patched Shrike.
Isiolo.

A few seen in December on a lava plain dotted with bush and a few trees. Difficult to approach. Most of the time the pair hopped about the rocks, and once ran ahead of me instead of taking to flight. The notes I heard were clear and loud, running down the scale,

PARIDAE

Parus afer barakae Jackson.

Kenya Grey Tit.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Habbaswein; Benane; Merille; Laisamis.

Common through the flat-topped acacia country of the N.F.D. Has the usual rasping Tit-like call, but also, to my surprise, a very pleasant little warbled song, very seldom heard.

Anthoscopus musculus (Hartlaub).

Mouse-coloured Cappoc-vogel.

Isiolo; Laisamis.

Common at Isiolo, and because of its minute size, caused much comment amongst the men. It was tame, paying no heed to human beings, and was easily approached. Usually in pairs, but in March several family parties were seen, individuals uttering a constant "dee—ee—dee—ee—dee" in thin high notes. A bird of low thorn-scrub interspersed with flat-topped acacias in rocky country.

ORIOLIDAE

Oriolus o. oriolus (Linn).

European Golden Oriole.

Isiolo.

A small flock seen early in November.

Oriolus auratus notatus Peters.

South African Golden Oriole.

Mombasa.

Oriolus monacha rolleti Salvadori

Sudan Black-headed Oriole.

Isiolo; Siolo River; Merille; Marsabit.

At Merille in late January common in pairs, and at Marsabit also in February and March. Calls various; the mewing note, a "whee—ku—ku—wow," and again "cheep—weeno." On the Siolo River at the end of March a few were seen, in very poor plumage.

CORVIDAE

Corvus corax edithae Phillips.

Dwarf Raven.

Kalacha; North Horr; Karoli Desert.

Immense numbers seen at North Horr, where it was the principal scavenger. The palms were black with them at night when they roosted. Long before dawn they became active, and the air was soon full of the swishing of their wings. Easily visible in the field are the flat nasal bristles and the white base to the black feathers of neck, upper breast and mantle, the latter particularly in the strong wind that usually blew at North Horr. There was much variety of plumage. Some apparently old birds were very ruffled looking, others sleek. Like most ravens, they were a curious mixture of wildness and cheekiness. I whiled away many an hour trying to catch one with a home-made trap made of a petrol-box balanced on a stick, to which a piece of string was attached, with a bit of meat as bait. One or two ravens would alight nearby and edge gently closer, watching carefully, and after many tentative approaches and precipitate retreats, one would suddenly pounce like lightning, insert a telescopic neck and beak inside and yank the meat away, only to be robbed of it by the other hungry ravens, less daring, that hung about in the vicinity. It was amusing too, to dump some carcase in the desert nearby, and watch. Scores, even hundreds, would assemble, but keeping well away and walking round suspiciously. Gradually the circle would narrow. Then fights were numerous as the birds in the front rank became nervous at being hustled along by those

in the rear, and obviously wanted to get outside the circle. They fought fiercely with wing-buffets and strong beak-jabs. A sheep's head was propped up against a stick: one of the leading birds, bolder than the rest, jabbed at it with its beak. It rolled over on to the dust, and the birds all rose in a panic, their worst fears of a booby trap apparently confirmed! They alighted some way away to calm down, and then the whole business of careful approach was gone through once more. At last the bravest were busy on the meat, but even then many of the craven-hearted waited some way away and robbed other birds of their pickings. Fierce fights occurred. One bird stood on the stomach of another which lay, back and wings a-flap in the dust, striking at it fiercely with its beak.

The Dwarf Ravens sometimes fly high up, and then their soarings are beautiful to watch. I have seen a high short-circling tower of them whirling round and round to a great height, like a living dust-devil. During the day they prefer to rest on the sand rather than in the few trees around the oasis pools. The call is a harsh croak, but there is also a curious "stomach-warble" like that of the Fan-tailed Raven.

It may be that it was the military camps which introduced the concentrations of this bird at North Horr.

Corvus albus P. L. S. Müller.

Pied Crow.

Kikuyu; Nanyuki; Nairobi; Mombasa; Nyeri.

Not seen on the Jombeni Mountains or at Meru.

Corvus capensis kordofanensis Laubmann.

Lesser Cape Rook.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; Mana (Jombeni Mountains); North Horr; Marsabit.

Widely distributed but local. Common at Laisamis, where immense numbers used to cluster round the wells with Vultures and Fan-tailed Ravens. Sociable, and found in flocks. Utters throaty squawks. Very rare at North Horr.

Corvultur albicollis (Latham).

White-necked Raven.

Voi.

None seen in the N.F.D.

Rhinocorax rhipidurus (Hartert).

Fan-tailed Raven.

Isiolo; Merille; Laisamis; Dida Gulgulla; Marsabit.

Common locally. One or two will always be found trailing along with a ragged flock of Lesser Cape Rooks, but otherwise it is solitary. Besides normal croaking note, there is another peculiar note that I can only call a "stomach-warble." The first time I heard it uttered was when one was being harried by a Fork-tailed Drongo as it perched on a branch. The Drongo repeatedly stooped at it, forcing the Raven to duck its head every time. Then the Raven uttered many times the deep warble, barely audible at twenty-five to thirty feet., something like "churr—de—de—churr—churr." The bird's belly seemed to vibrate meanwhile. In the arid Dida Gulgulla, north-east of Marsabit, many of these Ravens were seen; there they were shy and wild.

STURNIDAE

Creatophora carunculata (Gmelin).

Wattled Starlings.

Isiolo; Benane; Merille.

Two things about these birds were noticeable. One was the great diversity of plumage, the other, the attraction flocks on local movement searching for food had for birds of other kinds. Before I left Merille I found that the best way to find bird-life was to learn where Wattled Starlings were feeding, for where they were there would always be plenty of ground insects. They have a strong liking for fruit and berries as well as for insects. The following notes were made,

Benane, November. Flock of about twenty in bush, mostly females and immature birds. The males present had no wattles.

Isiolo, November. As at Benane, but more birds. No wattled birds.

Merille, 16th January. Numbers seen with Yellow-billed Shrikes. A few males had fairly developed lower wattles and one or two the upper wattles. Large numbers of immature birds present.

Merille, 21st January. Large flocks settled on trees in our camp and ate fruit. A few individuals kept up a persistent call like "pretty boy." Only lower wattles were evident in the males, and those only partially developed.

Merille, 25th January. Another flock, again with Yellow-billed Shrikes and also Nubian Carmine Bee-eaters, attracted by myriads of crawling crickets, locusts, etc.

Merille, 30th January. On a rocky kopje this evening a large flock was observed hunting for insects. They were scattered over the lower slopes, about three birds to a square yard, running in all directions with wings slightly a-flap, neck outstretched and head down, in quick little dashes. So intent were they that often birds collided when chasing the same insect. Lower wattles were very evident in many cases, and a few showed slight growth of upper wattles.

Merille, 3rd February. In same locality a large flock seen with Buffalo Weavers, Drongos and Sparrow Weavers; once again the attraction was myriads of crawling and jumping insects on the ground. I noticed again many well-developed lower wattles and definite growth of upper wattles in many of the males. When next I was at Merille in March, heavy rains had broken and there was not a sign of any Wattled Starlings, nor were there any at Isiolo, further south.

It would seem that the growth of the wattles is definitely yearly or seasonal. Starlings of this species must cover enormous areas in pursuit of crawling and jumping insects (not necessarily locusts) at the time when these insects breed.

Cinnyricinclus leucogaster verreauxi (Bocage).

Southern Violet-backed Starling.

Nanyuki; Nairobi. None seen in N.F.D.

Speculipastor bicolor Reichenow.

Magpie Starling.

North Horr.

On a hot stifling day in February, a pair of these brilliant starlings suddenly alighted by one of the oasis pools, drank, and then had a bath, splashing water over themselves with little wing-flicks and with their beaks. They stayed only a few minutes then flew off in an easterly direction, and I never saw the bird again.

Lamprocolius c. chalybaeus (Hemprich and Ehrenberg).

Blue-eared Glossy Starling.

Nairobi; Nanyuki; Isiolo; Habbaswein; Merille.

Common at Habbaswein in October and November, noisy and restless on moonlight nights, frequently flying about from tree to tree. In immense flocks in January at Merille, where during the hot hours thick-leaved trees by the river bed were a mass of these birds every day. Normally it is more often seen in small parties, often associating with *Spreo superbus*.

Lamprocolius corruscus mandanus van Someren.

Lamu Black-breasted Glossy Starling.

Mombasa; Changamwe; Mana (Jombeni Mts.).

Seen in small lots of four to six birds at Mana in borassus palms. Very noisy, with cheeping whistles; moving restlessly in short circular flights.

Lamprotornis p. purpuropterus Rüppell.

Rüppell's Long-tailed Glossy Starling.

Habbaswein.

In acacia country, moderately common. None seen elsewhere in N.F.D.

Cosmopsarus regius Reichenow.

Golden-breasted Starling.

Benane; Garba Tula; Merille.

First met with at Benane, where in late October and November it was extremely common in pairs and small lots of from four to six individuals. Like the Superb Starling, it was very tame. It used to perch on trucks, tents and the cookhouse, and even entered the mess via the branches of the acacia tree that formed the roof. So attractive was its plumage that many fell victims to catapults for the sake of their feathers used as helmet decorations.

Onychognathus morio shelleyi (Hartert.)
Meru.

East African Redwing.

Onychognathus tenuirostris (Rüppell).
Meru; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

Slender-billed Chestnut-wing.

Galeopsar salvadori Sharpe.

Bristle-crowned Chestnut-wing.

N. Uaso Nyiro (near Archer's Post); Habbaswein.

Spreo fischeri (Reichenow).
Benane.

Fischer's Starling.

In early December, following several days of heavy rain, I found several pairs of this Starling nesting in dense thorn scrub. The nests were roughly built of twigs, circular, about a foot in diameter and averaging ten feet from the ground. The nestlings were being fed by the parents, who were not at all disturbed when I approached directly below their nesting sites. Call, a loud, shrill whistle.

Spreo albicapillus.
North Horr.

White-capped Starling.

Individuals visited waterholes regularly in the morning between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Typical starling habits, running about like *Spreo superbus*. Very assertive, chased other birds away from holes. A harsh cry heard once, but birds were mainly silent.

Spreo superbus (Rüppell).

Superb Starling.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr.

Most common at Isiolo, where very tame. Used to enter our kitchens and messed and had to be "shooed" away like a chicken. Nesting at Isiolo in March in trees in our camp, even above our orderly room, always a noisy place with trucks constantly coming and going. Nests were rough, prickly-looking structures of twigs and grasses, usually fifteen to twenty feet from the ground, and the red gapes of the youngsters inside were clearly visible from below as they peered out watching for the parent birds. Very noisy, particularly on moonlight nights, and at times they whistle very well. Rare at North Horr, only a few pairs seen, and then very wild and unapproachable.

Spreo hildebrandti shelleyi Sharpe.
Isiolo.

Shelley's Starling.

Only seen at Isiolo, but less common than the Superb Starling, with which it is often noticed associating. Wilder and less amenable than that bird. Was certainly not nesting at Isiolo in March; indeed I saw no representative of this bird there after December, so perhaps it withdraws into the bana to breed.

Buphagus e. erythrorhynchus (Stanley).

Red-billed Oxpecker.;

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Marsabit; Isiolo River
Meru; Mana (Jombeni Mountains); Thika.

Usually found in parties of about eight, and very common in N.F.D. The following are some notes:

Isiolo, December. Very Common. One, seen to enter the nest of a Black-billed Sparrow Weaver, was immediately chased away and mobbed by a hurried concentration of those birds.

Merille, January. Comparatively rare, despite the enormous amount of game in the vicinity.

Marsabit, March. Oxpeckers common on downs below forest, frequenting grazing areas where numbers of donkeys and cattle used to feed.

Meru, 6th April. A pair of Red-billed Oxpeckers were seen with one very young bird perched in a tree in Meru village. Nearby was a hole in the trunk about forty feet from the ground, into which one bird kept flying with insects which it collected from the ground near the tree, in its beak.

This bird was most common at Garba Tula and Benane, where flocks were seen daily.

Zosterops virens kikuyuensis Sharpe.
Meru; Nanyuki.

Kikuyu Green White-eye.

Zosterops virens kaffensis Neumann.
Marsabit.

Kaffa Green White-eye.

Seen mainly in lots of two to three in forest trees. Not shy. Besides its short note it has a faint warbled song, so subdued as to be barely audible at a distance of ten feet.

NECTARINIIDAE

Nectarinia famosa aeneigularis Sharpe.
Nanyuki; Mana (Jombeni Mountains); Meru; Kabete.

Kenya Malachite Sunbird.

Nectarinia k. kilimensis Shelley.
Meru. Nanyuki; Kabete.

Bronze Sunbird.

Seen at Meru at 6,500 feet in a river valley. At Kabete seen several times. It has a lovely call, a rapid string of twinkling notes.

Nectarinia nectariniodes Fischer and Reichenow.
Isiolo; Siolo River.

Eastern Black-bellied Sunbird.

A dead male was handed to me at Isiolo for identification. A few were seen in a tremendous concentration of sunbirds on the Siolo River in March.

Drepanorhynchus reichenowi Fischer.
Near Timau; Nanyuki.

Golden-winged Sunbird.

Cinnyris h. habessinicus (Hemprich and Ehrenberg).
Isiolo, Garba Tula, Siolo River.

Shining Sunbird.

Common at Isiolo. In early December a pair were discovered busy nest-building in a low bush in open lava country. The nest was very exposed, waist high, and constructed of bits of grass and herbs woven externally with spiders' webs and lined with woolly seed heads. The pair built with great vigour, although they had to fly a long way for building materials. Strangely enough, they seemed to fly in opposite directions. The note is rasping. This little bird also figured largely in the March concentration of Sunbirds on the Siolo River. There was a stretch of this river where tall trees grew; these were full of sunbirds, all in a state of great excitement and feeding hard. It was difficult to pick out individuals, so restless were they, and so numerous. I put the number present in that small area at over a thousand.

Cinnyris mariquensis osiris (Finsch).
Isiolo; Siolo River.

Abyssinian Mariqua Sunbird.

Cinnyris venustus blicki.
North Horr.

Somali White-bellied Sunbird.

Found to be common in a patch of dense bush east of oasis at North Horr. It was in fine plumage and singing vigorously in February, a sharp twinkling little wren-like song.

Cinnyris venustus falkensteini Fischer and Reichenow. Kenya Buff-breasted Sunbird.
Siolo River; Meru; Nanyuki; North Horr.

At North Horr either this race or *fazoglensis* was often seen alongside the last-mentioned race. In that arid region they must have lived entirely on insects.

Cinnyris r. reichenowi Sharpe.
Meru; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

Nandi Double-collared Sunbird.

Chalcomitra amethystina doggetti (Sharpe). Kenya Highlands Amethyst Sunbird.
Marsabit.

Common in forest, cultivated areas and low bush at Marsabit, haunting low bush and the tops of forest trees. Often flies high and far in an erratic and tortuous course. Hawks after insects from the tops of forest trees like a Flycatcher. On 13th March a pair were seen frantically nest-building in a tall tree in a deep gorge. Externally the nest seemed to be made of grass and lichen woven on to an outer branch, and as I watched the pair were busy lining it with moss.

Chalcomitra senegalensis lamperti (Reichenow). Kenya Highlands Scarlet-breasted Sunbird.
Nanyuki.

Chalcomitra hunteri (Shelley). Somali Scarlet-chested Sunbird.
Isiolo; Siolo River; Garba Tula; Benane; Merille.

Stolid, for a Sunbird. Immature males numerous at the Siolo River in late March. I heard only a loud single note, frequently repeated.

Anthreptes collaris elachior Mearns.
Mombasa.

Mombasa Collared Sunbird.

Anthreptes orientalis orientalis Hartlaub. Kenya Violet-backed Sunbird.
Isiolo; Siolo River; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; Kalacha; North Horr.

Widely distributed throughout the N.F.D.—in desert, lava, acacia forest and arid bush. It is one of the most beautiful and interesting birds I met with in Kenya. The female in a quiet way is just as good to look at as the male. Flight erratic and fast—almost butterfly-like. Nesting at Merille in November and December, and many young birds seen with the parents in January. The female seemed to do most of the feeding, searching diligently for insects, uttering a constant “chip—chip” in reply to the somewhat plaintive “cheeps” of the young birds. This bird is crepuscular in habits, and many times has alighted near me long after dark. I have also heard the “flip—flap” of its wings and its sharp chip note as it flew from bush to bush. The male has a pleasant vivacious little warbled song, usually uttered when perched on a bush. This bird is conspicuous by constantly “twinkling” its wings and spreading its tail into a wide fan.

On one occasion I saw two hens fighting hard, apparently for possession of a male that was perched nearby: so vigorous was the fight that even when they fell to the ground with an audible bump they still kept on mauling each other.

PLOCEIDAE

I noticed a characteristic in certain weavers as to the position in which their nests are built, namely that they build their nests on the west side of the trees; particularly noticeable in *Plocepasser mahali melanorhynchus*, *P. donaldsoni*, *Pseudonigrita cabanisi*, *Othypantes r. reichenowi*, *Sitagra n. nigriceps*, and *S. r. rubiginosa*. The last two usually commenced building on the west side, although eventually the colony became so large that it overflowed on all sides.

In the flat-topped acacia country of the N.F.D. it is impossible to get lost because one can always find the west point from the position of the nests of *P. mahali*.

The reason can hardly be the question of prevailing wind, for in the N.F.D. this varies considerably, and the branches of a flat-topped acacia would hardly act as a barrier. In many cases the nests of the Black-capped Social Weaver have the entrance holes at the bottom of a solid pear shaped structure, so, in this instance at least, the wind factor must be ruled out. Possibly it is the sun which causes the birds to nest-build on the west side, for building commences in the early morning; and yet a flat-topped acacia casts a very slight shadow.

Bubalornis albirostris intermedius (Vieillot)
Isiolo; Merille.

Kenya Buffalo-Weaver.

A pair seen with two young birds at Merille in mid-January. The youngsters called insistently, uttering harsh grating cries. The parents foraged on the ground whilst the young birds perched nearby on the branch of a fallen tree. The family party was foraging with a mixed flock of Wattled Starlings and Uganda Yellow-billed Shrikes. Seen in February, again with a foraging party of White-crowned Shrikes, White-headed Buffalo Weavers and Wattled Starlings. On other occasions solitary. The flight is fast and direct and it seems to travel far from one place to another. Call a loud "churr."

Dinemellia d. dinemelli (Rüppell).

White-headed Buffalo-Weaver.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr; Gamra.

Common and widely distributed. Has a bubbling, twittering, prolonged note and a loud parrot-like call. A very sociable bird, foraging with Superb Starlings, Black-billed Sparrow-Weavers, etc. There was an exceptionally large colony breeding by the river-bed at Laisamis in November and December, and in January immature birds were common at Merille. This bird occurred in the Karoli Desert west of the lava escarpment wherever there was a patch of scrub or bush.

Plocepasser mahali melanorhynchus Bonaparte.

Black-billed Sparrow-Weaver.

Isiolo; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis.

None seen north of the Kasut. At Merille breeding in November, and in December at Habbaswein. A noisy night-songster.

Plocepasser donaldsoni Sharpe.

Donaldson's Sparrow-weaver.

Laisamis; twenty miles north-east of Marsabit Mountain; near Isiolo.

Very local, but haunts deadly country and may often be overlooked. It likes lava, intense heat, scattered low acacias, and solitude. At Laisamis it inhabited a stretch of lava some way from the river-bed with its green trees and great colonies of other Sparrow-Weavers. Characteristic is the manner in which it segregates itself from the Black-billed Sparrow-weaver, and indeed from most other birds. The only one with which it seems to fraternise is the White-headed Buffalo-weaver. Occurs in ragged parties; frequently flies from one rock to another or from one bush to another, invariably alighting on the top of whatever it rests on. Not shy, and a robust bird of direct flight. Has a variety of call notes, somewhat like a number of the calls of the Black-billed Sparrow-

weaver and White-headed Buffalo-weaver. There is a loud parrot-like cry, a "chink—chink" like a Stonechat, and a low twittering little song. It has some resemblance at first glimpse to the Common Wheatear, for with the wings closed the white rump and upper tail coverts are in part visible. On 5th March after rain I came across a colony of these Weavers nest-building on the lava twenty miles north-east of Marsabit Mountain. The nests seemed to be similar to, but larger than, those of the Black-billed Sparrow-weaver; pear-shaped and built in low thorn trees, at five to 10 feet from the ground. Nests, but no birds, were also seen on the lava at Gamra. At Isiolo, on a lava plain east of the town, there was a great concentration of nests in a small area of stunted bushes. In some cases as many as twenty nests were found in one bush. Apparently this species relies on nesting in the desolate "bana" for security.

Pseudonigrita cabanisi (Fischer and Reichenow).

Black-capped Social Weaver.

Matthews Range; Merille; Laisamis.

Another solitude-loving species which, however, prefers tall acacia trees for nesting purposes. It likes lava-rock-country in the "bana," and usually a colony selects a single giant Euphorbia or Acacia to build in, although on the Matthews Range I found a colony occupying two such trees. The number of nests in a colony usually is from forty to sixty. They are beautiful structures, closely woven with dry grass, and cone-shaped, the tapering top suspended by a stout grass cable to a branch of the tree. The entrance holes are two in number, one being stopped up in the breeding season. At Merille in January a colony of these birds were very active patching up their nests. Their behaviour generally was unusual, for on my approach they left the tree and dropped down to the lava and bush below, where they flitted about restlessly, uttering sharp little cries. On the ground and in bush they were sociable, perching close together and following each other when on the move.

Passer iagoensis rufocinctus Finsch and Reichenow.

Kenya Rufous Sparrow.

Near Timau; Nanyuki.

Passer castanopterus fulgens Friedmann.

South Somali Sparrow.

North Horr.

Very common in bush east of the oasis of North Horr in large flocks of over a hundred individuals. It probably made use of the oasis simply for water, for later, after rain, it disappeared. Very restless, and sociable. Flocks fly bunched up and not strung out. Call a "chirrup."

Passer griseus gcngonensis (Oustalet).

Parrot-billed Sparrow.

Isiolo; Garba Tula; Benane; Habbaswein; Merille; Laisamis; North Horr.

Common in ones and twos until January, when it was in vast flocks at Merille associating with Drongo and Silver-bills, and then very wild. Frequently seen pecking at gummy exudation from trees by the river-bed, to the branches of which they used to cling like woodpeckers. Rare at North Horr.

Phormoplectes i. insignis (Sharpe).

Nairobi Brown-capped Weaver.

Marsabit.

A few pairs seen in forest at Marsabit. I heard a low chirruping note, and also a high squeaky call in three short cadences that reminded me of the note of the Black-capped Weaver of South Africa.

Othyphantes r. reichenowi (Fischer).

Reichenow's Weaver.

Nanyuki; Marsabit; Kabete; Meru; Nairobi.

Common. Nest-building at Marsabit in March and at Meru in April. Has a shrill call and a loud "pinking" note.

Sitagra i. intermedia (Rüppell). Abyssinian Masked Weaver.
 Isiolo; Habbaswein; Merille; Marsabit.

At Merille between December and February common in flocks, but in very poor plumage.

Sitabra vitellina uluensis (Neumann). Kenya Vitelline Weaver.
 Benane; Marsabit.

At Marsabit in March numbers were found in sheltered ravines, in company with Reichenow's Weaver.

Sitagra n. nigriceps (Layard). Spot-backed Weaver.
 Meru; Kinyanga (Jombeni Mts.)

A very large colony was actively repairing and building up nests at Kinyanga in early April.

Sitagra r. rubiginosa (Rüppell). Chestnut Weaver.

An immense colony was found in a great Baobab at Benane in November; they were active and noisy, with rippling call notes.

Hyphanturgus ocularius suahelicus (Neumann). East African Spectacled Weaver.
 Siolo River; Meru; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

This Weaver has the habit of "twinkling" wings and tail.

Hyphanturgus nigricollis melanoxanthus Cabanis. Kenya Black-necked Weaver.
 Merille.

Common at Merille in pairs or several pairs together. Difficult to approach as they creep about in dense bush, twisting and turning like Tits. Only call heard a Chaffinch-like "pink." Also seen on the leaf-tops of doum palms.

Xanthophilus aureoflavus bojeri (Cabanis). Mombasa Golden Weaver.
 Siolo River; Mombasa.

Local; fairly common on the Siolo River. They were busy building in late March, uttering loud chattering cries.

Xanthophilus xanthops camburni (Sharpe). Camburn's Golden Weaver.
 Meru; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

Busy completing nests in April.

Amblyospiza albifrons montana van Someren. Kenya Grosbeak Weaver.
 Meru; Mana.

Building in April. Largest colony was one of fifteen nests at about 5,500 feet near Meru.

Anaplectes melanotis (Lafresneye). Red-winged Anaplectes.
 Merille; Siolo River.

Common at Merille, favouring flat-topped acacia country intersected by wooded watercourses. I saw individuals only, never the sexes together. A male at Merille in December was on several consecutive days foraging with a party of Somali Helmet Shrikes. It was the Weaver that attached itself to the Shrikes, not the converse; it followed them closely everywhere. In January, a male, and later a female, was seen with a party of Abyssinian Masked Weavers. At the Siolo River a male was seen feeding with a great congregation of Sunbirds. I never heard this bird utter any note at all, and in feeding it is quiet and usually concealed in the foliage.

Quelea quelea aethiopica (Sundevall).

Sudan Diach.

Merille; Mana (Jombeni Mountains).

In vast flocks at Merille in January and February, associating with Parrot-billed Sparrows and Silverbills.

Euplectes n. nigroventris Cassin.

Zanzibar Red Bishop.

Mombasa; Changamwe.

Euplectes hordacea changamwensis (Mearns).

East Coast Fire-crowned Bishop.

Mombasa.

Euplectes hordacea craspedoptera (Bonaparte).

Abyssinian Fire-crowned Bishop,

Marsabit.

A ragged flock in off-season plumage seen at Marsabit in February. Very wild. Accompanying Waxbills and Silverbills.

Euplectes capensis xanthomelas Rüppell.

Abyssinian Yellow Bishop.

Nanyuki; Meru; Kinyanga and Mana (Jombeni Mts.); Thika, Nairobi.

Urobrachya axilliaris zanzibarica Shelley.

Zanzibar Fan-tailed Widow-bird.

Changamwe.

Coliuspasser albonotatus eques (Hartlaub.)

East African White-winged Whydah.

Marsabit; Meru.

In early February in Marsabit great flocks of this bird roosted in the rough hedges bordering cultivation. They were shy and restless, and when disturbed always flew strongly far away, uttering loud tinkling cries. At Meru in April several males seen displaying in fallow cultivations at about 5,000 feet.

Coliuspasser ardens suahelica (van Someren).

Kenya Red-naped Whydah.

Nanyuki; Meru; Kinyanga (Jombeni Mts.); Kabete.

Coliuspasser progne delamerei (Shelley).

Kenya Sakabula.

Near Nyeri.

In April males were in full breeding plumage.

Spermestes cucullatus scutatus Heuglin.

Abyssinian Bronze Mannikin .

Meru; Kinyanga; Mana (Jombeni Mts.)

Spermestes n. nigriceps Cassin.

Rufous-backed Mannikin.

Meru.

Euodice cantans meridionalis (Mearns).

Kenya Silver-bill.

Merille; Laisamis.

Inhabits arid semi-desert country such as the Kasut. A flock of about thirty were seen one day in January at a water hole at Laisamis, perched close together in a small bush almost touching one another. A few feet away in the waterhole an old Samburu man was bathing: the birds were intently waiting for the water. They uttered loud tinkling little cries when forced up by the approach of a Goshawk, and flew in a cloud into dense cover. Later this species was seen on the eastern slopes of the Matthews Range, flocked with Diochs and Parrot-billed Sparrows.

Odontospiza caniceps (Reichenow).

Grey-headed Silver-bill.

Marsabit.

A small flock, wild and shy, was seen in fallow at Marsabit in February.

Nigrata canicapilla diabolica (Reichenow and Neumann). Kilimanjaro Grey-headed
Negro-Finch.

Meru.

A pair seen at Meru at 6,000 feet, were haunting the sandy margin of a pool over-hung with rocks and herbage. They flew about with rapid little jerks like Sunbirds, and picked up seeds that lay at the water's edge. They were silent.

Amadina fasciata alexanderi Neumann. Abyssinian Cut-throat.
Merille.

Large numbers were seen one evening in January at Merille in flat-topped acacias. They were in company with Parrot-billed Sparrows, Abyssinian Masked Weavers and Black-billed Sparrow Weavers, and uttered frequent tinkling little cries.

Mandingoa nitidula chubbi (Ogilvie-Grant). Marsabit Green-backed Twin-spot.
Meru.

A female seen in a banana forest at a range of a yard or so in April. Subsequently, at 6,500 feet, in a dark rocky gorge a pair seen slipping quietly through dense foliage. Also seen in lower forest in similar damp country at about 4,500 feet.

Pytilia melba soudanensis (Sharpe). Kenya Melba.
Merille; North Horr.

Common at North Horr in February after rain, in dense bush east of the oasis. Always in pairs either on the ground or flitting about the bases of low bushes.

Lagonosticta rubricata hildebrandti Neumann. Kenya Fire-finch.
Meru.

Lagonosticta senegala kikuyuensis van Someren. Kikuyu Red-billed Fire-finch.
Isiolo; Siolo River; Kinyanga and Mana (Jombeni Mts.); Meru.

Common. Haunted our camp at Isiolo and was very tame, frequently entering messes and kitchens.

Lagonosticta senegala somaliensis Salvadori. Somali Red-billed Fire-finch.
Mombasa.

Coccygia melanotis kilimensis Sharpe. Kenya Yellow-bellied Waxbill.
Mana; (Jombeni Mts.)

Estrilda astrild massaica Neumann. Masai Waxbill.
Meru.

Common in parties of thirty or so on eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya.

Estrilda astrild minor (Cabanis). Mombasa Waxbill.
Mombasa.

Estrilda rhodopyga centralis Kothe. Uganda Crimson-rumped Waxbill.
Nanyuki; Marsabit.

A great flock of at least 200 strong, very restless and noisy, seen in Marsabit forest in February. They also frequented native cultivations, uttering little twittering cries. At Nanyuki, in April, seen only in pairs.

Estrilda c. charmosyna (Reichenow). Abyssinian Red-rumped Waxbill.
Isiolo; Siolo River; Benane; Merille; Laisamis; Thika.

This beautiful bird was widely distributed and was in pairs during October and November at Isiolo and Benane. It was then a silent bird, much given to clinging to the bases of trunks of trees and hanging about in all sorts of positions like a Tit. It was in company with the Purple Grenadier. Likes rocks and rocky places, especially when overgrown with scrub or bush. At Merille in January in parties of five to eight individuals, and always sociable not only with its own kind but with others. Very noisy. One call was a loud sweet whistle in two cadences, first low and then rising smoothly to a higher key. Another, seldom heard, is a pretty warbled song.

Uraeginthus bengalus brunneigularis Mearns. Kenya Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu.
Isiolo; Siolo River; Meru; Mana; Thika.

Uraeginthus bengalus ugogoensis Reichenow. East Coast Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu.
Mombasa.

Uraeginthus cyanocephalus (Richmond). Blue-capped Cordon-bleu.
Isiolo.

Rare, seen only October to December at Isiolo, in pairs in acacia country.

Granatina ianthinogaster ugandae van Someren. Hawash Purple Grenadier.
Isiolo.

Common and resident. In December a male was seen acting in a curious way towards a hen. Both were perched on a twig; the cock with a blade of grass in its beak, went through rhythmic motions, straining upwards on its legs with head and neck out-thrust, beak upturned and head towards hen. After doing this several times, he suddenly flew off, dropped the blade of grass, and uttered shrill excited cries. It is a very restless bird. A great "twinkler" of wings and tail. In March I heard its song, a pleasantly modulated sing-song theme of four notes: "whee—whee—whee—whee," the third note rising and the last falling in key.

Hypochera ultramarina purpurascens Reichenow. Kenya Purple Indigo-bird.
Meru; Kinyanga and Mana (Jombeni Mts.); Thika.

Vidua macroura (Pallas). Pin-tailed Whydah.
Meru; Mana; Mombasa.

Steganura p. paradisaea (Linn.) Paradise Whydah.
Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya at about 5,000 feet.
A single male in full plumage seen in early April.

FRINGILLIDAE

Serinus dorsostriatus maculicollis Sharpe. Somali White-bellied Canary.
Isiolo; Benane; Merille.

Always in pairs; Singing well at Isiolo in March.

Serinus sulphuratus sharpii Neumann. Kenya Brimstone Canary.
Meru; Nanyuki.

A male seen displaying round a female at Nanyuki in April, shuffled round with feathers puffed out, wings a-flutter and tail widespread in a sort of dance, singing sweetly the whole time.

Poliospiza angolensis reichenowi (Salvadori). Kenya Yellow-rumped Seed-eater.
Isiolo; Meru; Marsabit; Mana (Jombeni Mts.)

Nesting at Meru in April in cultivations by streams. In flocks on lava at Isiolo in December.

Poliospiza s. striolata (Rüppell).

Streaky seed-eater.

Mana; Meru; Nanyuki.

Nesting in April at Meru. One pair building in a bush in a sheltered valley, collected mosses and grasses as I watched them. Has a very pleasant canary-like song.

Poliospiza burtoni albifrons (Sharpe).

Kenya Grosbeak Seed-eater.

Meru.

This large Seed-eater was seen several times one miserable cold day on Mt. Kenya, at about 7,000 feet.

Spinus citrinelloides kikuyuensis Neumann.

Kenya Citril.

Kinyanga and Mana (Jombeni Mts.); Meru.

A pleasant songster. The notes are rather low and indistinct but very sweet and canary-like; uttering a short, sharp note when in flight. Essentially a leaf-searcher, and seen mainly in pairs.

EMBERIZIDAE

Emberiza f. flaviventris Stephens.

Golden-breasted Bunting.

Nanyuki, in a clearing in forest at 7,000 feet—a single bird seen.

Emberiza poliopleura (Salvadori).

Somali Golden-breasted Bunting.

Garba Tula; Benane; Merille; North Horr.

Common at Benane in dense bush, mainly in pairs. A ground feeder; very tame, seldom flying more than a few yards when pursued. Occasionally it perched on the top of a bush or rock and sang its short pleasant song, but on the whole was a silent bird. Common on the eastern slopes of the Matthews Range, but never seen in flat-topped acacia country. At Laisamis it avoided the wooded watercourse, haunting the lava in company with Donaldson's Weavers and the White-headed Buffalo Weaver.